

Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

Testimony of Brian Naylor, MSgt USAF retired
18 February 2022

Increase Funding for Centers for Independent Living

My name MSgt Brian Naylor, USAF retired, and I am employed by Independence Northwest Inc, one of five Centers for Independent Living (CIL) in CT. As a 32-year retired/disabled veteran, my current job as Veterans/Independent Living Advocate is to assist aging veterans with VA benefits, Medicare CHOICES, Medicare Saving Program, obtaining and presenting the CT Wartime Service Medals, and a host of other personal needs that may be requested by veterans and their families. Currently, I am the only Veterans Advocate in the CIL state network and have seen an increasing need for personal basic senior veteran needs, especially during the pandemic.

My work with these Veteran's and with low-income Seniors who need food and medical has allowed me to provide services to hundreds of people who otherwise would not get them. It is not easy for some people to ask for assistance, and being able to work one-on-one with them, so they don't feel awkward, or pressure is truly unique and why the CIL's work is so important. We make it about the individual. Through this work that the CIL's accomplish, we can help empower people to take more control of their own lives.

The CIL's employ a diverse group of individuals with disabilities and real-world experiences to be sure that other people in similar circumstances have a voice and an advocate that can relate to their needs. Our programs include services for Veterans, deaf and hearing impaired, youth transitions services, emergency food, an assistive technology program to help with isolated people during the pandemic, and Money Follows the Person.

During my 9 plus years in this position I have seen people with dire needs, grown in my own sensitivity and have been able to assist countless Veterans and seniors on a personal basis. I ask that you increase their funding by \$1,000,000 so we can work and help empower more seniors and veterans to take control of their own lives.

Brian C. Naylor (MSgt USAF retired)
Veterans/Independent Living Advocate
Independence Northwest Inc.